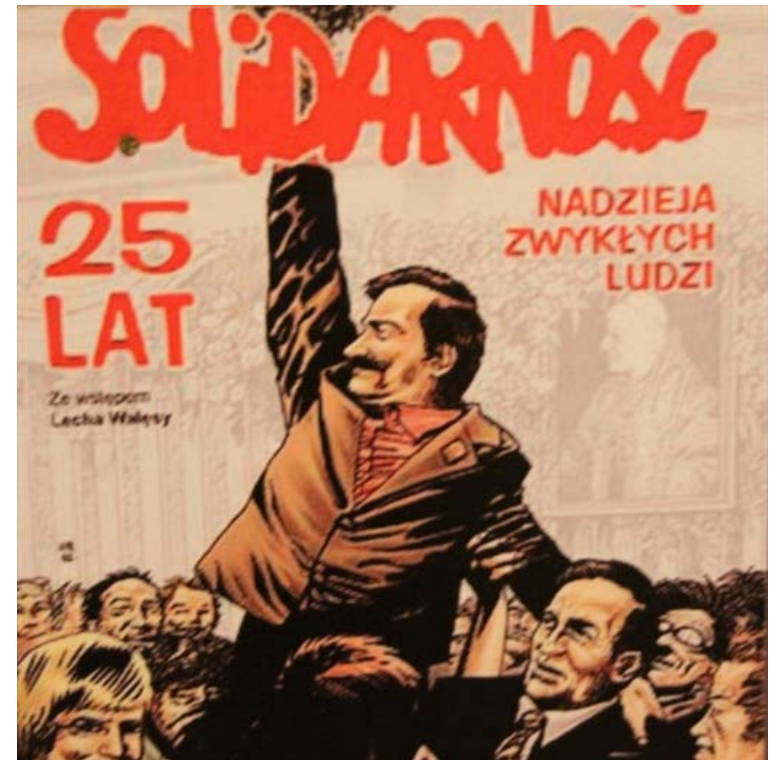


# Solidarity Movement in Poland



Presentation developed for the Center for Slavic and East European Studies at The Ohio State University by Kathryn Metz

# What is Solidarity?

- [Solidarity Forever](#): pay attention to lyrics (on back of page) and images
- *Solidarity: Unity or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group.*
- Can you think of any examples in US history when we've had solidarity?

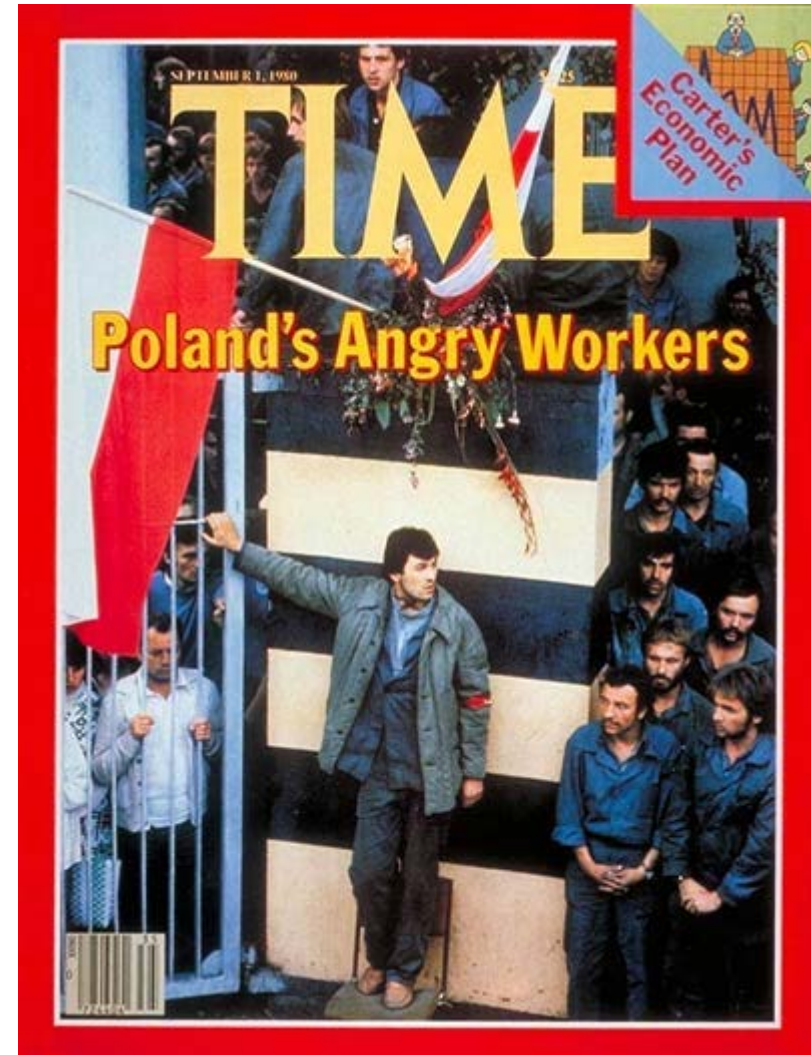
# Poland suffering economically

- Food prices increased, but wages did not
- Foreign debt reached \$18 billion
- Economy shrinking
- Workers tried to protest, but government crushed it



# Workers revolt

- Underground networks begin to form, including labor unions
- Solidarity union emerged in August 1980 in Gdansk at the Lenin Shipyards
- Communist gov't allowed unions to exist
- Eventually, 9 million people joined solidarity (25% of Polish population)



# Solidarity's Principles

- Lech Walesa led the Solidarity movement
- Organized around bread and butter issues
- Wanted TRUTH to conquer UNTRUTH
- Began as economic protest, but eventually demanded political changes



What is the feeling of this image?



# Solidarity's Demands

- Key demands:
- Self-governing trade unions
- The right to strike
  - Government gave them these rights!
- People had civil liberties!
- US and Pope John Paul II (Polish) supported the movement



# Quote from Solidarity member:

- "[There was] tremendous hope and a kind of electricity between people. You know, it's said that we Poles become a nation once a generation ... and that was one of those moments when, suddenly, millions of people felt that they wanted the same thing, which was free trade unions to represent them against the [Communist] Party. It gave people hope that perhaps communism could be reformed. We now know that it couldn't," Sikorski said

# How Did Moscow React?

- Solidarity threatened communism – it gave people the right to strike and civil rights
- Brezhnev didn't want to invade Poland because Soviets were already in Afghanistan
- Brezhnev ordered Polish President to crush Solidarity movement





# Polish Response

- A fireman strike was crushed by Polish police
- Polish army used force to prevent more strikes
- President declared martial law and suspended civil rights
- Outlawed Solidarity
- Arrested Lech Walesa



# Positive end

- In 1989, the government entered negotiations with Solidarity and there were semi-free elections. Solidarity won the most seats and Lech Walesa was elected president.
- Overall, Solidarity's anti-communist message spread throughout the Soviet bloc and helped contribute to the end of communism in 1989